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## COLD.

MEN anticipate a coming winter with various feelings: one dreads the Christmas bills; another, the boys home for the holidays; another, a new year anxious as the last; but all men dread the cold. I know they do, for I am a surgeon, and see much of its effects among my poorer patients; and for that reason I have to consider how we ought to treat cold. Treat it! you will say—shut the door, poke up the fire, put your soul in slippers, and your body in an easy-chair. Treat it like any other unbidden guest, and shut it out. I was thinking, however, of a great class of our fellow-countrymen who go down to the sea in ships after seals and whales, or up mountains to gather in the black-faced sheep, or wander about the streets of our cities, and are picked up stiff, senseless bundles of rags by the night-police.

To such it matters but little that our natural philosophers deny the existence of cold—that it is merely the abstraction of a certain quantity of the heat which is indispensable to animal life—that warmth stimulates to vitality—and that if the temperature is lowered, it may at last reach a point when it ceases to have any effect; but, nevertheless, these facts are interesting.

The atmosphere is always robbing us of our animal heat, which has an average temperature of 98 degrees. If it did not do so, if the atmosphere were itself 98 degrees, we should feel it disagreeably warm, and prefer one much lower—say 60 or 65 degrees. How low the temperature of the body may be allowed to sink with impunity, is doubtful, and seems to vary with the individual; the robust and lively man evolving plenty of heat, enjoys a degree of cold which makes a lean, pink-nosed, blue-lipped woman truly a miserable spectacle. Tooke, in his view of the Russian empire, says that drivers and horses suffer no inconvenience with the thermometer at 20—24 degrees below zero, and women stand for four or five hours with their draggled petticoats stiff with ice. There have been noticed, however, some circumstances which would go to shew that national hardihood could not be always relied upon; for instance, in the greatest experiment of the effects of cold on man—the French retreat from Russia—the Dutch soldiers of the 3d Regiment of the Grenadiers of the Guard, consisting of 1787 men, officers and soldiers, nearly all perished, as two years after, only forty-one of them, including their colonel, General Tindal, who was wounded, had returned to France; while of the two other regiments of Grenadiers, composed of men nearly all of whom were born in the south of France, a considerable number

were saved. The Germans lost, in proportion, a much larger number of men than the French. Though many of the latter were reduced almost to nudity by the Cossacks having stolen their clothes, they did not die from the effects of cold in the same numbers as the Northerners, whom one would have expected to brave out that dreadful campaign with greater impunity. There is a singular mystery about the effects of cold—mysterious as these countries round which it consolidates its impenetrable barrier. When your great natural philosopher calculates with extraordinary nicety the laws of heat, we cannot follow his calculations; how much more difficult, then, must it be for us surgeons to determine how much, not a whole body, but perhaps some patch of tissue, may be reduced in temperature with hope of its recovery.

Take as an example now, Napoleon's army as it returns from Russia, and let me quote from the great surgeon, Baron Larrey, no less soldier than surgeon:

'The death of the men struck by cold was preceded by pallor of the face, by a sort of idiocy, by hesitation of speech, weakness of sight, and even complete loss of sensation; and in this condition some were marched for a shorter or longer period, conducted by their comrades or their friends. Muscular action was visibly weakened; they reeled on their legs as if intoxicated; weakness progressed gradually till they fell down, which was a certain sign of the complete extinction of vitality. The continuous and rapid march of the soldiers collected into a mass obliged those who could not keep up to leave the centre of the column, and keep to the sides of the road. Once separated from the compact body, and left to their own resources, they soon lost their equilibrium, and fell into the ditches filled with snow, from whence it was difficult to remove them; they were struck suddenly with a painful choking, passed into a lethargy, and in a few seconds ended their existence. When on the heights of Mienedski, one of the points of Russia which seemed to me most elevated, many had bleeding from the nose. . . . The external air had undoubtedly become more rarefied, and no longer offering resistance to the action of the fluids, of which the movement is constrained by the internal vital forces and the expansion of the animal heat, these fluids passed off by the points of least resistance, which are generally the mucous surfaces, especially the mucous lining of the nose. This death (from cold) did not seem to me a painful one; as the vital forces were gradually extinguished, they drew after them the general sensibility to external agencies, and with them disappeared the faculties of special sensation.'

We found almost all the persons frozen to death lying on their stomachs, and with no sign of decomposition.'

How did any escape? One would think that what was cold to one must have been equally so to the others. We see in a garden, after some severe frost, particular species of plants affected by it, but we say the others were more hardy; but here is one species of animal suffering so unequally, as regards its individual members, as to strike the most ordinary observer with surprise.

Now, it would seem that cold affects in only two ways—it predisposes to the death of tissues, and it kills. In the first case, the part is not more affected than that it is very cold; its temperature is greatly lowered; the contracted blood-vessels allow but little of the vital fluid to pass. At this moment, it seems that but a small increase in the temperature may endanger the life of the part, or even of the whole body. Let us quote again from Baron Larrey. 'Towards the end of the winter of 1795-96, when I was with the army of the Eastern Pyrenees, we passed suddenly from an extremely intense cold to an elevated temperature. A great number of the soldiers, especially those who were at the siege of Rosas, then had their feet frozen; some advanced sentinels were even found dead at their post in the first hours of the thaw; and although we had passed fifteen or twenty days under the influence of the severe cold, none of the soldiers of the advanced posts of the siege presented themselves at the ambulances of the intrenchment, of which I was director-in-chief, until the date of the thaw. So in Holland, the soldiers who for the sake of *le petit caporal* stood patiently in the snow, did so with impunity till the first thaw, when they were attacked by gangrene. And what is this frost-bite? It is a part in which the power of evolving heat and the circulation of the blood has been entirely destroyed; and this most easily occurs in situations at a distance from the seat of circulation—the toes, fingers, nose, ears, &c. The part, if thin, like the ear, may be crisp and hard, ready to break off; but still these frost-bitten parts are not actually irrecoverable; they may be thawed, but, strange as it may seem, the cold man's greatest enemy is the heat he so earnestly prays for. After the battle of Eylau, the thermometer had fallen to fourteen and fifteen degrees below zero, but not a single soldier complained of any accident from the effect of cold, though, till the 9th of February, they had passed the nights in snow, and exposed to the hardest frost.' General Février, finding his enemies unaffected by his usual weapons, changed his tactics. In the night of the 9th, up went the temperature to three, four, and five degrees above zero, and the ever-active French soldiers felt themselves heavy and their feet numb, troubled with pins and needles; and on pulling off their shoes and stockings, behold the toes were black and dried, and a red blush on the instep told them that the increased temperature had been too much for their chilled extremities, and that their feet were mortifying—rotting off them! They were suffering in large what we do in small, when we stick our cold toes to the bars of the grate in this cold wintry weather. We get some small patch of skin inflamed by the heat, which, in its cold condition, it cannot stand, and we call the patch a chilblain.

John Hunter froze the ears of rabbits, then thawed them rapidly, and they inflamed. Woe, says Larrey, woe to the man benumbed with cold, if he enter too suddenly a warm room, or come too near the fire of a bivouac! We lately saw a fine-looking Scotch girl with her feet gangrenous from cold; she had been tramping linen in a tub, and feeling them cold and numb, she stepped from it into another tub which held warm but not by any means hot water.

With regard to the treatment of frost-bitten persons, the part affected should be rubbed with cold water or snow, and then with fluids of a medium temperature, in a cold room; cautiously bring the patient into a warmer atmosphere, and administer small quantities of cordials or warm tea, then cover him up in bed, and encourage perspiration. Even where the patient seems quite dead, or has lain as if dead for days, you must give a fair trial to these remedies. When poor Boutilhat, the French peasant, who awoke crying out for drink after his four days' sleep in the snow, was brought to his friends, they wrapped him in warm linen dipped in aromatic water, and this was but too probably the cause of the poor fellow's feet mortifying.

Now, we have said that cold may not only predispose to the death of animals or portions of animal tissues, but it may kill them. How it slaughters its victims, we do not exactly know: some say it paralyses the heart; others think that the cold, to use a popular expression, drives the blood inwards, and kills by apoplexy. The irresistible sleepiness that creeps over a person 'lost in the snow' is well known, and has been often described; if once it is yielded to, death, under the forlorn circumstances usually present, is sure to result. But, undoubtedly, it may kill at once. Persons have been found stone-dead standing upright at their posts, all the machinery of life having stopped at once—the mouth half open, as it was when the last groan was uttered; the limbs still in the position they assumed during life, and having undergone, through the peculiar antiseptic nature of the cold, none of the changes we find after other forms of death.

Captain Warems reports to the Admiralty thus: 'In the month of August 1775, I was sailing about 77 degrees north latitude, when one morning, about a mile from my vessel, I saw the sea entirely blocked up by ice. Nothing could be seen, far as the eye could reach, but mountains and peaks covered with snow. The wind soon fell to a calm, and I remained for two days in the constant expectation of being crushed by that frightful mass of ice which the slightest wind could force upon us. We had passed the second day in such anxieties, when about midnight the wind got up, and we immediately heard horrible crackling of ice, which broke and tossed about with a noise resembling thunder. That was a terrible night for us; but by the morning, the wind having become by degrees less violent, we saw the barrier of ice which was before us entirely broken up, and a large channel extending out of sight between its two sides. The sun now shone out, and we sailed away from the northward before a light breeze. Suddenly, when looking at the sides of the icy channel, we saw the masts of a ship; but what was still more surprising to us, was the singular manner in which its sails were placed, and the dismantled appearance of its spars and manceuvres.

'It continued to sail on for some time, then stopping by a block of ice, it remained motionless. I could not then resist my feelings of curiosity; I got into my gig with some of my sailors, and went towards this strange vessel.

'We saw, as we drew near, that it was very much damaged by the ice. Not a man was to be seen on the deck, which was covered with snow. We shouted, but no one replied. Before getting up the side, I looked through a port-hole which was open, and saw a man seated before a table, upon which were all the necessary materials for writing. Arrived on the deck, we opened the hatchway, and went down into the cabin; there we found the ship's clerk seated as we had before seen him through the port-hole. But what were our terror and astonishment when we saw that it was a corpse, and that a green damp mould covered his cheeks and forehead, and hung over his eyes, which were open!'

'He had a pen in his hand, and the ship's log lay

before him. The last lines he had written were as follow :

" 11th November 1762.

" It is now seventeen days since we were shut up in the ice. The fire went out yesterday, and our captain has since tried to light it again, but without success. His wife died this morning. There is no more hope."

" My sailors kept aloof in alarm from this dead body, which seemed still living. We entered together the state-room, and the first object which attracted us was the body of a woman laid on a bed, in an attitude of great and perplexed attention. One would have said, from the freshness of her features, that she was still in life, had not the contraction of her limbs told us that she was dead. Before her a young man was seated on the floor, holding a steel in one hand, and a flint in the other, and having before him several pieces of German tinder. We passed on to the fore-cabin, and found there several sailors laid in their hammocks, and a dog stretched out at the foot of the ladder. It was in vain that we sought for provisions and firewood: we discovered nothing. Then my sailors began to say that it was an enchanted ship; and they declared their intentions of remaining but a very short time longer on board. We then, after having taken the ship's log, set out for our vessel, stricken with terror at the thought of the fatal instance we had just seen of the peril of polar navigation, in so high a degree of north latitude. On my return, I found, by comparing the documents which I had in my possession, that the vessel had been missing for thirteen years."

Now, although these are extreme cases, and but seldom heard of, don't think that will excuse you, my good reader, if you see any even in this comparatively temperate country, for instance, cold or likely to be cold, and you do not your best to warm them. Think, while you sit over the fire, or turn in the warm blankets, or button up your over-coat—think, when you have a warm grasp of a friend's hand, or feel your child's warm cheek nestle against yours—think of the heat-absorbing powers of door-steps, and common stairs, and east winds, and parish-officers, and cold shoulders, and, if you will take my advice; let the cold of winter exhibit one of its characteristic powers on you—let it drive the blood inwards to your heart. Do what you can to diffuse warmth and comfort among your less fortunate neighbours.

#### THE VILLAGE WONDERS.

LIKE one greater than either of us, 'we woke one morning, and found ourselves famous.' We had waked the previous morning very humdrum, ordinary specimens of the feminine gender, in Edinburgh; this morning, we found ourselves at a Highland village, and as I have above said, famous. Who are they? That was the question that absorbed the postmaster and the toll-keeper—it perplexed the minister and the hotel-keeper—it interested the visitors at the hotel, and the cotters by the loch-side—the very dogs and birds inquired in their mute language, 'Who are they?' It's a pity we were not young men, for we could have enjoyed ourselves much more than we did, since we should not have needed to be so proper and quiet. That was what we were not; but what we were, was the question. All that was known was, that two ordinary-looking girls had suddenly appeared in the village at that dreamy fairy-time, a Highland sunset—that they had no luggage but what they carried in their hands—that they had immediately endeavoured to secure lodgings anywhere but at the hotel, but in the scarcity of 'rooms to let,' had finally got accommodation at Mrs Stewart's small cottage; thereupon Mrs Stewart became as one of the lions—the mouthpiece of the wonders—the oracle of the village. Opinions of us varied, as the following

conversations will shew. It was not Mrs Stewart's fault that she could not supply them with definite information; for, amiable and kind-hearted though she was, she was not free from that invariable failing in country villages, especially Highland ones—the love of gossip. We easily saw how the different results of her conversations swayed her opinions, and the pleasure we found in confusing her transparent mind was quite piquante. The second morning after our arrival, the postmaster and his wife found it necessary to visit Mrs Stewart.

" Sae ye've gotten twa leddies bidin' wi' ye, Mrs Stewart. Wha are they?"

(Mrs Stewart's mind was not made up yet, and she took care not to express herself too strongly at first.)

" Ay, but I kenna wha they are. They havena tellt me as yet; but leave me alone for findin' out funny things!"

" Ye may weel say that! Hoo lang are they gaun to bide wi' ye?"

" Ane o' them tellt me the day that they liket the place sae weel, they wad stay a fortnight, if I wad keep them; and I said, 'Yes,' so I'm supposing they'll stay."

" Can ye no find out their names?"

" Na! I hear theirsels ca'ing Ally and Carry, and sometimes Granny; but ony mair I canna tell—I've had nae opportunity o' wilin' it oot o' them; and I dinna like to ask dou richt, 'What's your name?'"

" When their letters come, we shall see; if they get ony?"

" They're writin' away this mornin' at ony rate."

" We'll see then. But what kind o' folk d'ye think they'll be?"

" The faither o' ane o' them's a hoose-penter, that's certain, for the lassie's brocht a bit brod to try her haun' upon; and I'm thinkin' the ither ane maun be the dochter o' a miller or corndealer; for they've some bits o' prent steikit thegither wi' yellow paper; it maun be on that trade, by the picture outside; and it's ca'd the *Cornhill Maggsen*."

" What has Maggy to do wi' Corn?"

" I dinna ken."

" I'm thinkin' they'll be dressmaker or milliner bodies theirsels," suggested the postmistress.

" Dressmakers! they are no that weel pitten on!" responds her spouse.

" Sure certain, they haes just the claes they staun in, and puin' eneugh trash it is. But ye ken cobblers' shoon are aye down at the heel."

" I'm thinking they're no ledgies, ony gate—leddies wad hae mair to say about theirsels," said the postmaster.

" Ay, then they're aye talkin' and haverin' aboot lads."

" Whilk is a sure sign o' a milliner."

" There's ane that I think they maun be baith wantin', for they're kind o' fechtin' aboot him—they ca' him Garry Bauldie. I think he maun be some great catch, for they speak maist and langest aboot him—ye see they dinna ken that Hieland wa's are sae thin, and just speak out their mind—but they've a deal o' havering aboot some Brownie or Browning (ill-faured set a' thae brownies are), and aboot Curry Bell and Dickins. Ye see I mind the names, to see if they'll be of ony use to me afterwards."

" They maun be glaikit hizzies."

" Yet I dinna think they're that a' thegither; they're sae quiet i' the house, and respectful to me, and very little trouble—that's a' thing maks me think they're no ledgies. And when they're no clishmaclaverin' o' nichts, if I'll gang in by accident, they're reading either aboot the grain-trade, or oot o' a buil' whaur like sentence gangs jump wi' the ither, for a' the wold like a see-saw. Pou'try, they ca'd it—but why pou'try, I dinna ken, if it's no that the jabbers o' a bubbly-jock or a clockin'-hen haes mair sense in them."

'Maybe because nane but geese or ither foulis read them!'

A hearty laugh and my appearance closed the important colloquy for the time. That afternoon the carrier, in the same mysterious manner in which we appeared ourselves, brought two portmanteaus for us.

'Here, Mrs Stewart, here's something solid for your leddies.'

'Which leddies? What's their names?'

'I dinna ken—no more than yersel. I was tauld to leave them for the leddies at Mrs Stewart's.'

'Whar frae?'

'Callander.'

'Wha gie'd ye them?'

'The station-master.'

'What did he say?'

'Naething but what I've tellt ye.'

This was a terminus, so she knocked at our door.

'Here's some luggage com'd; but we dinna ken if it should be for you. What name should be on it?'

'Oh, it's all right. We expected them. Ask the man to bring them in.'

She did so with evident unwillingness, but we parted with the carrier on the best of terms.

*Passer-by* loq. 'Hoo are ye gettin' on wi' your lodgers?'

'Fine.'

'No fund oot their names yet?'

'No yet.'

'I wonder if they've ony. I'm thinkin' they're no that canny—maybe fairies, or elfins, or witches. I wadna be you, Mrs Stewart, for something. They came in a flicht o' sunlight, and they'll gang in a puff o' smoke. Mair by token, when Nanse was down wi' her water-stoops to the loch, she saw them lookin' into the water like a couple o' fules, and she went gay near them on purpose; and the fair-haired one, Ally, said to the ither: "Hasn't that a fine effect, that glorious green on the water?" "Ay, Ally; but I love all water-scenes so much: mind you, I'm half a mermaid!" And what she meant by that, but something unearthly, I wad like to know.'

'Na, na! Rather owre substantial for ony unearthly bein', especially the Carry ane—she's about as braid as she's lang—and there nane o' them that bonny either; and my! what hearty meals they take—that's no fairy-like!'

'Faither says they're some gamblin' beggars, but mither thinks they maun be practised gipases. They hinna seen them yet, but they're comin' by to get a peep o' them the morn.'

'Come early, then, for I never ken what they'll be after: they generally bang out i' the mornin' without rhyme or reason, and sometimes come back to dinner. At ither times, I'll find them landed in their room at the dusk, and they'll tell me they've been some score o' miles. I dinna like to misdoot them; but it looks funny, for they're evident toun lassies, and that set are aye puling things. Now, how a toun lassie could walk round the loch, and come in to tea as if naething had happened, I canna mak oot; and they proved they'd been round.'

'Nae toun body could do that. But thae lassies maun be either witches or practised trampin' gipases. I'm hopin' that when they gang awa', they'll leave you some sicht o' a note, and no just let ye whistle for't.'

'Na, na, let alone; and, as the wise man says, "We'll no skirt afore the prin's jaggit us." But I'm no that feared; I somehow think they're a' richt.'

'We'll see. Good-day.'

Mrs Stewart, popping in her head, and then herself: 'Are ye gaun oot the day for a stravaig, leddies?'

'Not to-day. We will just be about the doors. We have had one or two tolerably long walks since we came here, haven't we?'

'Ay, that ye have! Ye've surely been accustomed to walkin'!'

'Yes; but not so much as we have done here.'

'Ye've done wonders then. I've gotten your boots brushed, but I wad like hers. What am I to ca' her?'

This was addressed to me, on behalf of my friend. I was fairly caught, unprepared, and answerless. I looked painfully at her.

'Never mind a name for me, Mrs Stewart; you'll hear some time; but we'll be like the Queen, and not tell ye till we go away!' She pretended to enjoy it very much, but, I have no doubt, vowed vengeance.

That evening, Mrs Stewart commenced the attack again. 'It's a cauld nicht; will ye no come butt, and warm yersels, and haes a bit crack, leddies?'

We were cold, and much amused with her, so we went. Ally took off her thin house-boots, and pushed forward her feet to the fire. 'I'm so cold,' she said.

'No wonder,' said Mrs Stewart; 'they're such silly shoes; they'll no keep heat in them, I se warrant.'

'I never wear anything else.'

'Where did you get them?'

'London.' (Item for Mrs Stewart.)

'Ye'll no be sisters!'

'No; we have no relation to each other.' (Item.) 'I dinna think ye were, for ye're no like one another; but the toll-wife thought ye maun be.'

'The toll-wife must be interested in us.—But have you any nice old witch-stories to tell us, Mrs Stewart, or things about the places here?'

'Hundreds. Have ye ever been in the Highlands afore?'

'Often; but never at this place.'

'And do ye like this country?'

'Very well; and we're so much amused with the people, they all stare at us so, and seem so much astonished. Do they think us wild beasts?'

'Everybody's askin' me wha ye are?'

'And what do you tell them?'

'Jist that I dinna ken mysel,' said Mrs Stewart, a little crest-fallen; 'and they say it's gey queer to haef follie bidin' in the house, and no be able to tell their names.'

'So it is—I never thought of it,' exclaimed I. 'We're elevated into curiosities, lions, and everything; and we shan't let out our names at all, to keep up the fun. We should lose our romantic interest if they found out "the nameless lassie's name!"'

'But surely you can tell them something about us?' said Ally.

'Naething but that ye're frae the south; and fond o' pentin', and walkin', and readin'!'

'That is always something! Are they not content with it?'

'Not they.'

'I wonder if they'll find out much more,' said Ally. Mrs Stewart turned to me: 'What kind o' tongue has she—it's no Scotch, nor Edinburgh, nor English, that I've heard?'

Hereupon sundry particulars were entered into, which left her as much in the dark as ever.

'If it's a fair question, what pairt do ye live in, leddies?'

We explained, with a similarly wide margin.

'Ye'll have a gay time in the south. Do ye go to many balls?'

'Not to balls. Neither are we very gay—we're too busy.'

'Busy—what business have ye?'

'We are both eldest daughters, and that's a perfect labour in itself.'

'What ye'll ca' labour—toomng the money out o' your purses upon counters, among silks, and velvets, and things.'

'No, no, Mrs Stewart, not that exactly.'

'What kind o' queer letters are they ye had to-day frae hanme? Was yon your names?'

'No. To amuse the village, we bade them just put on our initials.'

She was called to the door by an inquisitive neighbour, who, of necessity, was marched in to criticise us, we bearing the inspection with the most unaffected artlessness. Such was only a specimen of Mrs Stewart's tactics; for to go through them all, and our answers, would make a tolerably well-sized volume.

'What ladies are these you have with you?' said the minister.

'I dinna ken.'

'What are their names at least?'

'I canna find oot, sir.'

'Why don't you ask them?'

'They winna tell.'

'That does not look well,' said the minister; and he ever afterwards honoured us with a broad scrutinising stare, in right of his cloth.

Another person, smitten by the general curiosity, was a *daf* boy belonging to the village. Everywhere we went, far or near, we saw him some time or other during the day. No matter how early, or how privately we set out, he knew, and set out too. Sometimes he would walk past us, and then sit down for a long time, and again overtake us. At first, we were a little alarmed and uncomfortable, but when we knew more about him, it only added to our amusement. He never spoke once to us, and never pretended to notice us. No doubt the little spy greatly edified his mother and granny.

'Isn't it queer for a toun-body to look down into a loch, when they're no accustomed t'it, and see the water wavin' away?' We were thus accosted by a most peculiar, smart, dark-eyed, elderly woman. 'Do ye like the Hielands?'

'Very much; there are such beautiful places to be seen.'

'Ye'll haes seen near everything a'ready? Ye'll haes been walkin' about a deal?'

'Yes, a good deal.'

'Hiv ye seen the glen fa?'

'No. Where is it?'

'Wad ye like to go? I'm gaun there the noo. It's rael bonny.'

We assented.

'Ye'll be the leddies that's stoppin' down at Mrs Stewart's?'

We acknowledged it.

'Div ye like her?'

'She is very kind and obliging.'

'She's a fine body.'

'Is she your sister?' she whispered once to me, indicating Ally with her thumb.

'No; she is not my sister.'

'Is she ony relation?'

'None in the world.'

'What's her name?'

'I'm afraid you must ask her that yourself.'

'What's yours, then?'

'It's such a long one, you could not pronounce it, and it is not worth trying to.'

When we had seen the really beautiful falls, and were on level ground again, she turned to Ally: 'What's your name now, miss?'

'People always forget names among these hills; I don't believe you could tell me your own now, if I were to ask you!'

With many a long screed of confidential gossip, she tried to tempt us to break our resolution, but in vain.

The innkeeper 'daundered' down also to Mrs Stewart's once. 'Have you never fund out your leddies' names?'

'Ne'er hae I. They winna tell me them, Jenny nor Jessamy, for a' my speerin' at them.'

'I'm thinking they wadna haes been sae lang wi' me without my finding oot. Do they get nae letters?'

'Yes; but they haes jist some o' the A B C on them,

and "Care o' the Postmaster." Such a daft-like thing. It's one o' the things I dinna like aboot them, as if they couldna spell.'

'I'm thinkin' they can do that richt weel.'

'I ken that; for the postnaister shewed me twa letters they had addressed to Edinburgh to freends there, and a richt black dashin' hand they baith write; and they helpit me with my accounts the ither nicht, and richt grand figures they are, for certain.'

'I'm thinking they're baith born ladies!'

'No—div ye? Why?'

'Because Lord and Lady and Miss Fitzbohn, they askit me the ither day what was their names, and I tellt 'em naebody could find oot. And they kind o' laughed, and Miss said: "I've got a great fancy to find out myself." And I said: "My lady, you'll find them any day you like by the loch-side, for they've begun sketches there." And she and her mother did go, but I don't know what they said, only they bow to them now, when they meet them, and I heard Miss say: "They are uncommon in everything."

Again:

'What kind o' lodgers are they ye have?'

'That's mair nor I can tell.'

'Hoot, nonsense! What'll be their names then?'

'I never was so beat in all my life. I askit the ane, and she said: "We'll be like the Queen, and not tell our names till we go away; and when I speered at the ither ane, she says: "What's in a name, Mrs Stewart? Peppermint by any ither name would smell as sweet." But I never can be angry with them, however much I'm provoked at them. We've gotten gey intimate noo; and I like them rael weel. They've been twice butt at nights wi' me warming theirsels at the fire, and they're rael cheery bodies.'

'Why did ye no speer at them then?'

'Ay did I; but a' that I've fund oot is, that they were in Edinburgh before they cam here, and that maist o' their freends are there. I've heard them speak o' this one's carriage and that one's carriage, and this hotel and that hotel, and Sir This and Lady that, and Honourable Something Else; and they couldna haes kend thaefolk unless they were gey stunnin' theirsels.'

'I dinna believe in them. What made them come here?'

'Jist to see the places, and learn to pent things frae natur.'

'Daft-like leddies.'

'The Carry one says to me the ither day: "Now, Mrs Stewart, you must let me wash the tea-cups, and make the beds and sweep the floor, for it's such fun!"' And I'm no thinkin' that if she'd been obliged to do it, she wad haes thocht it fun.'

'Na, na; leddies wad haes brawer dresses!'

'Ay, but they're aye neat; and their dresses are made sae funny, like what my mither used to wear; and wi' belts round their waists, like wee laddies. But I suppose it maun be the fashion.'

'Onybody can get the fashion in Edinburgh. They'll be shopkeepers!'

'Ay, but onybody canna get beautiful goold watches. And I had to wash some o' their linen, and it was sae bonny, wi' dabbit holes worked a' round their things, and lace ayont it; and I've heard say that ye ken leddies by that mair than their out-dresses.'

'If I were a leddy, I wad wear silks every day.'

'And they've got initials on their letters, and is na that the thing only grand folk haes! And the leddies at the hotel bow to them when they meet them!'

'They're no to ken nae better! But gude-bye the day. I dinna tak them for gospel, mind.'

A Highland lassie had been listening for some time to the conversation. 'Sae ye havena fund oot their names yet?'

'No; and I'm no gaun to try it nae mair, for I'm

tired o't, and I'm turnin' to like them, and I winna bother them.'

'They were down the loch-side this morning again!'

'Ay, at their sketching; and beautiful sketches they make, the Ally ane best.'

'Some folk said they werena canny; but dogs and bairns dinna tak to uncanny folk; and if ye saw oor Ruffler—every time he sees them far away, he flees like wud, and 'll hardly leave them; and they bring bits o' biscuits and bread to him. And Miss Robson up there says her dog Roy is the same, and he's a snappy thing. Do ye think they're weel aff?'

'They maun be; or how could they ha'e come a' this distance for nae business. And they're raal genteel wi' me. I'm sure I could cheat them, if I liket, but they dinna lose onything wi' being free. And, forby, they're see thankful to me for everything I do; it's a perfect pleasure. They canna be accustomed to lodgings.'

'I was raal glad that I cam in and saw them the ither nicht when they were butt wi' you—they're nice canty leddies, ony gate. And if they're see weel aff as ye think they is, I wish oor Donald would fa' across ane o' them, for he's every bit a gentleman, barrin' the money, and that he canna win muckle o', for a' his hard work at the tailorin'. Poor man, he's guid enough to be a marrow for onybody!'

'Deed is he. He's a perfect jewel of a man!'

Thus was our past and future mapped out for us by the villagers—not that their guesses came near the truth. Their ignorance was bliss; their ignorance was the mother of admiration.

The night before our departure, we were very confidential and friendly with Mrs Stewart before her bright blazing fire. We had been directing her how to forward our luggage, and gave her labels with the long-coveted names and addresses. 'You see they are not much worth knowing, after all. But hasn't it been a good joke? What a deal of fun and clatter it has given both the people and us! What do they think of us? Do they think we are cracked—or what?'

'No. How should I know? We don't, I say!—'

'I understand. But you know quite well that more than half of these Gaelic harangues were about us.'

'Such nonsense. Folk are see conceited as to think we're speakin' o' them, when we talk in our mither-tongue.'

'Maybe I know more of your mother-tongue than you are aware of—so take care.'

'No! Do ye?'

'What do they say about us?'

'They think ye're raal, fine, honest, sonsy lassies, o' the richt cut, and no feared for a Highland peat-moss.'

'And I think they're quite correct; don't you? Will you keep up the mystery about us when we're gone, for your private amusement?'

'Deed will I.'

'Town will be a great change to us, Mrs Stewart. Will you miss us?'

'Ay, won't I though! And won't ye miss me and my ingle-cheek, and my bit crack? ye'll no get the like in Edinburgh!'

'No. We won't get such fun again for a long time, for they keep us in trim order at home.'

'Puir things!'

'But I'm so sleepy, and we're to be up so early—we must go.'

I drew out my watch.

'What a fine watch! Is it a motionless one?'

'No. Listen!' and she examined it amid our hearty laughing.

'Good-night, Mrs Stewart. It's the last time we'll say that to you.'

'Dimna break my heart, lassies. I hope it'll pour rain like the mischief the morn!'

'That's not a kind wish, Mrs Stewart, for we must

leave in any weather. Good-bye, in case we leave before you are up in the morning.'

'Do you think I wad let ye leave my house without rising at ony hour to mak ye breakfasts?'

And true enough Mrs Stewart was up, though not usually an early riser; and when the inhabitants of the village were all astirring, 'the nameless lassies' had vanished in the same mysterious manner as they had come.

I believe Mrs Stewart kept up the talk a good while even after we left, for her own amusement. They need it all, poor things; for I know that even when we were there, we heard them talk about the visitors of the preceding summer; and as to how long we would last them in that line, I cannot pretend to guess. But as a secret when told is no secret, we won't tell it now, and let our readers make the most of it, as our Highland neighbours did.

#### SCHAMYL IN CAPTIVITY.

In the struggle of Russia to subdue the Caucasus, Schamyl Imam was the last of the powerful free chiefs who held out. Prince Dadian, the Prince of Abkhazia, and one or two others, may indeed preserve their warlike rank, but they are in reality only splendid vassals of the czar. The embers of war may still be here and there smouldering sulkily, as among the Shapougha; but the flame which only a few months ago burned so fiercely is extinguished; and when Schamyl at last laid down his arms, the long, hopeless struggle of the warlike tribes who acknowledged him as their chief was felt to be ended.

There is no doubt that a great deal of the personal importance which attached to Schamyl was in the first instance attributable to the ignorance of his enemies. A man perhaps of very little previous account among his tribe is often at once raised to supreme power when messengers from a victorious general are sent to treat with him. But the priestly soldier whose wars have just closed so gallantly was no drivelling marabout or fanatic dervish. Though it is difficult to see clearly through the thick haze which shrouds political events among the wild mountains and defiles of the Caucasus, we know enough to excite our interest, and even our respect for him. By paths unknown to European ambition; by dauntless courage, an austere simplicity, rare self-denial, great firmness of purpose, and promptitude in action; by some intrigues, and some cruelties, he raised himself from the humble rank of groom to the Imam Kazy Moulleah, to a position of unexampled authority among his countrymen; and he was even believed to possess that saintly character which is usually ascribed by the populace to the possession of supreme power in the East.

A touching and romantic incident made us first acquainted with his personal appearance and manner of life when at home among his mountains. It is a story of as chivalrous an act as that said to have passed between Richard the Lion-hearted and Salah-eddin in the time of the third Crusade: a tale of generous enmity on one side, and noble trust upon the other. Many years ago, the Imam's eldest son, Djemmal Eddin, was taken prisoner by the Russians. His mother, Fatimite, died of grief for his loss; but the boy was carefully educated by the late czar, and loaded with favours. He grew up with all the ideas of a Russian noble and a courtier. But at last his father obtained his exchange for the Princesses Orbeliani and Tchawchawadze, whose romantic imprisonment at Veden made so much noise. The young man returned to his native mountains, but soon sickened there. He fell into a state of hypochondria, which puzzled all the medicine-men and charm-chanters; so at last Schamyl sent a messenger to ask aid of the Russians. Colonel the Prince Myrsky was fortunate enough to receive this knightly

request, and to his undying honour, immediately despatched Dr Petroffsky, the best surgeon of his regiment, to the young man's aid; but in vain.

According to the most trustworthy information obtainable, Schamyl is now probably about sixty years of age, though, he himself not knowing exactly, this is mere conjecture. He does not look more than forty. He is tall in stature. His countenance is soft, calm, imposing. Its principal characteristic is melancholy; but when the muscles of the face contract, it expresses great energy. His complexion is pale, his eyebrows strongly marked; his eyes are of a dark gray, and usually half shut, like those of a lion reposing. His beard is dyed a reddish brown by henna, and very carefully kept; his mouth is good; lips, red; teeth, small, even, white, and pointed; his hands small, white, and scrupulously attended to. His walk is slow and grave. He looks like a hero.

When at Veden, his ordinary costume was a Leaguian tunic, white or green; a high-pointed cap of sheep-skin, white as snow, round which was wound a turban of white muslin, the ends falling behind. The point of the cap was in red cloth, with a black tassel. Embroidered gaiters, and boots of yellow or red leather, covered his legs and feet. On Fridays, when he went to the mosque, he wore a long white or green robe over his ordinary dress; and in winter, a crimson pelisse, lined with black lamb-skin, protected him from the cold. In war-time, his arms were a sword, a dagger, a pair of pistols, and a gun. Two attendants also rode beside him, each carrying another pair of pistols and a gun for the Imam's use. This post was looked upon as one of high honour among the mountaineers; and if one of these attendants was killed, another immediately replaced him. Schamyl was said to be the best horseman among a race of horsemen, and his horses were the strongest and fleetest which could be procured.

The qualities of the Imam's mind belong to the very highest kind of Asiatic excellence. He prided himself upon his truthfulness. He was sparing of words, patient, sagacious, clear-sighted, politic, charitable; cold in his bearing, but tender-hearted, when his affections were roused. He used no titles, but gave and took the 'Thee and Thou' with the simplest peasant. He was abstemious, and always ate alone. His food was flour, milk, fruit, rice, honey, tea; he rarely touched meat. He tried to suppress every kind of luxury; and his influence, where that of the greatest potentates of the earth have been proved powerless, was still supreme. Smoking was long as much a necessity to the Circassian as to the Turk; but Schamyl forbade it, and ordered that the money hitherto spent in tobacco should be used to purchase gunpowder. He was obeyed. His morals were pure, and he would not tolerate any weakness in others. A Tartar woman, a widow, and childless, lived with a Leaguian who had promised her marriage. She became pregnant. Schamyl had her interrogated, and the truth being made clear, he cut off the heads both of the woman and her paramour. The axe which did execution on this occasion is kept as a curiosity, and is in possession of Field-marshal the Prince Bariatinsky, viceroy of the Caucasus.

Schamyl had four wives: but of these Patimite died in 1839, and another he repudiated, because she bore him no children. He allowed his wives no mark of rank or distinction. He was a master rather than a husband.

From 1834 to 1859—for twenty-five years—this mountain-chief waged war with the most distinguished captains of Russia, and made the country over which he ruled one of the sternest military schools in the world. His enmity was one which no defeats, losses, or privations could diminish, which no offers, however splendid, could lull to sleep. Till at last, chased from one fastness, hitherto deemed impregnable, to another fondly thought more inaccessible still, he

looked his farewell at hope from the heights of Ghounib, and surrendered, to save the lives of a mere handful of devoted followers, whom misfortune and disaster had left still true to him. Happily, even warfare has long ceased to be wantonly cruel or vindictive. The captive Imam has been allotted an ample pension and a residence in the town of Kalouga.

Kalouga pleased Schamyl, on account of the woods, hills, and ravines, which remind him of the Caucasus. The house hired for him has three stories. He has kept the upper story for himself, given the middle story to one of his sons, and the lower to another. Of the six rooms on the upper story, four are occupied by his daughters, who live with him—that is, two rooms are occupied by each young lady. These six rooms are very simply furnished with large sofas or divans, and are not ornamented with a single picture, or even a looking-glass. The Imam's private room serves as study, oratory, and bedroom. A large divan, an arm-chair, a writing-desk, a card-table, a book-stand, a basin, and a cushion to kneel on at prayer-time, complete its furniture. The middle story, destined for Rasy Mahomet and his wife Kerimate, who is said to be very beautiful, is adorned with glasses, draperies, carpets, and bronzes; its mistress has not yet arrived, but Schamyl has reclaimed Prince Bariatinsky's intercession to obtain permission for her to join her husband. On his arrival at Kalouga, Schamyl visited some of the authorities, conversed much with the archbishop, interested himself in the daily details of the life of Russian soldiers, and visited with much attention the barracks of the regiment in garrison. The contact of this son of nature, endowed with a vast and lucid mind, kept in check only by native superstition, with our artificial life, is very interesting, as are also his patriarchal manners, and his curious sympathies and antipathies. Strange to all things, knowing nothing of the circumstances which surround him, he shews much tact in his actions; and the words he addressed to M. Rounovsky (to whom we are indebted for some of these particulars), when that officer was entering on his functions, are curiously illustrative of the tone of his mind. 'When,' said the Imam, 'it pleases God to make a child an orphan, to replace its mother is given to it a nurse, who ought to feed, dress, wash, and keep it from harm. If the child remains in good health, gay, clean, and happy, every one praises the nurse: it is said the nurse does her duty, and loves the child. But if the orphan is ailing, dirty, slovenly, it is not the child we blame, but the nurse who has neglected it, left it untaught, and who does not love it. I am an old man; but I am a stranger here. I understand neither your language nor your customs; and so I fancy that I am no longer the old man Schamyl, but a little child, become, through God's will, an orphan, having need of a nurse. You are this nurse, and I pray you to love me as a nurse loves her child. For my part, I will love you not only as a child loves his nurse, but as old Schamyl can love a man who does good to him.'

He frankly shews his sympathies and antipathies. He is very fond of music, and when asked out, first inquires whether any one will play the piano at the house to which he is invited. M. Rounovsky bought him an organ, which delighted him exceedingly. But a conjuror is the person who seems to interest him more than can be conceived. An individual of this class having apparently changed a piece of money, enveloped in a pocket-handkerchief, into a plume of feathers, the Imam was so impressed that he declared the mere remembrance of the trick had troubled his thoughts even at prayers. 'Nevertheless,' he added, 'had the man been brought before me at Veden, I would have had him hanged.'

A crab, which the Imam saw for the first time in his life at Kalouga, excited his utmost aversion. Taking it in one hand, he examined

it attentively, till the crab seized a finger in its claws. He then threw it down, but continued to watch it eagerly. Having remarked the animal's mode of walking, he became indignant, kicked it from before him, and ordered Khadjio, one of his suite, to drive it out of the room. It was long before he recovered from the disagreeable sensation produced on his mind by the crab. 'I never saw such a cowardly animal,' he said; 'and if I ever fancied the devil, it was in that likeness.'

At first, he went a great deal into society, and liked balls, though he disapproved of the dress-coats worn by European gentlemen, and also of the bare shoulders exposed by ladies; the latter being a temptation which mortal man, says the Imam, is too weak to look upon. He liked the theatre too, and especially the dancing; but the uncovered faces of so many women troubled him, and he soon ceased his attendance. Now, when invited anywhere, he asks if ladies will be present. If the reply is affirmative, he refuses. His religion, he says, teaches him to object to unveiled women. But he is not bigoted on the subject, and is quite willing to discuss it.

The captive Imam still excites some curiosity, but it is rapidly dying away; and he will soon be as little talked of or thought about as Timour Meerza, or Abd-el-Kader.

#### THE FAST CANAL-BOAT.

THE other day, I was one of a party of more or less scientific persons who made a trip from the City Basin to Paddington Stop, on the London Grand Junction Canal. Our object was to note the success of an experiment which has already gladdened the hearts of canal proprietors, and which promises a large boon to that portion of the public in the habit of intrusting goods to the hands of carriers.

When it is said that the experiment in question was neither more nor less than the application of steam-power to the boats and barges employed in carrying various kinds of merchandise on canals, it may probably occur to many readers that such an improvement on the old mode of propulsion is very obvious, very simple, and very easy. Were this the case, steam would long ago have superseded horse-power on canals; but when the subject is practically considered, many difficulties arise, the chief of which is the swell of the water caused by the action of paddles, and even by that of an ordinary screw. The narrow channels of these watery highways are confined by artificial banks, which would be seriously damaged by any considerable displacement of water, and in some parts quite washed away.

Before describing what I venture to call an interesting journey, I will beg my reader's kind indulgence for a few statistical facts relating to canal traffic, and also to canals regarded as property. There are in the United Kingdom nearly five thousand miles of canals, representing a capital of certainly not less than £40,000,000, and perhaps a good deal more. Before railways were invented, canal property flourished exceedingly, and a nominal hundred pounds in canal scrip may have meant three hundred or four hundred, or even five hundred pounds in actual money. Those were brave days, at least for canal proprietors; but their light has faded to such a mere glimmer, that a share in the Grand Junction Canal Company, nominally worth a hundred pounds, cannot be viewed by brokers and capitalists as anything more than seventy pounds, if so much. It need scarcely be said that the railway system, which has driven the time-honoured stage-coach and post-chaise off the road, has likewise proved the Nemesis of canal stock. And yet, strange to tell, the enormous depreciation in the value of shares is by no means justified by a falling off in the way of business. Canals are more in use now than they ever were. According to the last

returns, 25,000 tons more merchandise are conveyed by canal in the course of a single year than in any year previous to the commencement of railway operations in Great Britain. Excepting where a rapid transit is desirable at all hazards, the safe carriage by canal-boat is even preferable to the goods-train, which has rather a bad character for getting in the way of other trains, particularly express ones; and the trifling advantage of five per cent, which is all that the canal companies offer below the railway scale of goods-carriage, is even worth considering by persons who have any very large dealings with carriers. Of late years, canal stock may be said to have suffered from panic and prejudice more than anything. It would indeed be five thousand pities, should those five thousand miles of waterway prove at last the road to ruin. A townsmen has little idea of the beauty which the artificial rivers of a flat country add to the face of nature. He thinks of a canal as he sees it—a straight, formal cutting, filled with water of a sooty tinge, and a greasy lustre; nor does the vision of that same stream winding clear through flowery meads and pleasant woodlands, ever occur to him. Yet there are places which our canal-boatman wots of, where the trees meet overhead; and parks come sloping down to the water. On this account, the permanent way of a canal has one great advantage over that of a railway; its presence, fertilising as well as ornamental, is in the majority of cases rather courted than repelled, and exorbitant claims of compensation have been rare in canal history.

Until the year 1848, canal companies were prohibited by law from being carriers; but in the parliamentary session of that year, an act was passed removing the disqualification. The effect has been, of course, to increase very materially the revenue of these bodies, which formerly depended solely on tolls. The Grand Junction Canal Company has now about two hundred and fifty boats of its own. Another legislative act, of no further date than last year, forbids the amalgamation of railway and canal property, and insures to the public the benefit of a fair competition.

These matters have furnished part of our talk on the wharf of the Grand Junction Canal Company, off which is lying the steam fly-boat *Pioneer*. Our little party seems a large one when we have all embarked, and are forced to elbow one another for standing-room. A fly-boat, my readers will bear in mind, is the long narrow barge, not more than seven feet wide anywhere, and approximating to seventy-five in length, which contrasts favourably in shape and general liveliness of appearance with the black, flat, broad, and immensely ugly coal-barge, also employed in canal navigation. A fly-boat carries her cargo almost as high above her hold as deep in it. The goods are piled in a heap that narrows to a fourteen-inch plank at the top; and the whole is covered with tarpaulin. Along the top ridge walks the bargeeman, this foot-way being his only means of bodily communication between the stem of the boat and his cabin in the steerage. A queer little hole is that same cabin, the effect of entering which is to make you feel like Gulliver in the *Quibus Flestrin* stage of his adventures. It is a Lilliputian interior, not after the model of any one room in a house, but like the cobbler's establishment celebrated in song—a condensed hotch-potch of parlour, and kitchen, and all. By simply turning round once upon your heel, you may scour your clothes against the stove, sweep down everything on the opposite side of the cabin, knock yourself against the door at one end, and finish by tumbling into bed at the other. The decoration of the cabin is cheerful, and, in the brightness of its red and yellow panelling, pleasantly recalls the Dutch toys of infancy, and the mysterious domesticity of a travelling show. It may be superfluous to add, that

the apartment is decidedly stuffy, the atmosphere being that of a tailor's workshop over an oven. Some canal-boats are family-boats—a man, his wife, and four or five children occupying the toy-house which I have attempted to describe; but the companies do not own any such boats as these, which all belong to private proprietors.

Our steam fly-boat, the *Pioneer*, presented some features of modification which may be briefly noted. Her boiler and engine occupied the usual space of the Dutch cabin, which was removed forward, thus diminishing the room for stowage. The *Pioneer* is a new boat, expressly built for the purpose of steam-traffic; but neither boat nor machinery appeared to me so trim and ship-shape as their newness would have augured. It seems, however, that great improvements are to be made, now that the success of the main experiment has been placed beyond question. For instance, the ordinary tiller, which takes up a great deal too much room to work in, will give way in favour of a wheel; the machinery will thus get more space, and the cabin will be built over it. Of course, the wheel by which the boat is to be steered will be placed before instead of abaft the cabin and engine, just as it is placed on the deck of large vessels, before the poop. All these things are to come.

We will take the *Pioneer* as we find her, which is thus—the helmsman has a space in the stern just large enough to work his tiller in; then there is a small raised scrap of deck, with a light iron railing at each side, and the cone-shaped boiler cropping up in the middle; then comes the cabin; and in advance of that is the piled-up cargo in its tarpaulin case; for I should state that this trip of the *Pioneer* is a real business trip, with no nonsense about it, but, on the contrary, a large amount of timber and heavy grocery goods, which are very serious affairs. The *Pioneer* is going all the way to Wolverhampton, though we amateurs are bound no further than to the Gauge House at Paddington Stop.

It is as cold a day, and as much like winter at last, as the most determined stickler for old-fashioned seasonable weather could wish at the close of the English year. It is freezing, sharp, and, after having been delightfully bright and bracing till noon, is now making up its mind to snow. It does snow a little, just as the *Pioneer* starts, at half-past one o'clock, from the Company's wharf. The assembled porters, boatmen, and other servants of the Company, standing on the quay, give lusty cheers for the *Pioneer*.

Off we go, very steadily, but at a speed which is rapid to that of the ordinary locomotion on canals; indeed, we are travelling just twice as quickly as we should travel by horse-haulage. Our way lies for some distance where no horse can tow barge or boat, but where boats and barges are usually propelled by human power. We are going underground, through a brick tunnel no larger than a sewer. The *Pioneer* has another fly-boat in tow, laden with a similar cargo, and some extraordinary precautions are requisite on this novel occasion. We keep one side of the water-way, and the second boat keeps the other; so that, in case of the *Pioneer* having to slacken speed, and Number Two getting too much way on her, she shall not run into our stern. Boats are taken through this tunnel so slowly by the old fashion, that they meet without any danger, though each keeps midway till hailed by the vessel coming in an opposite direction. The simple but arduous process of 'legging' has hitherto been in practice. A board is placed out from either side of the fly-boat, and on this board lies a man, with his feet against the slimy wall of the tunnel. In this position, he walks horizontally, and so, by great exertion, moves the boat. Two men are employed in the operation, and it seems wonderful that they should find time, on hearing the signal of an approaching boat, to rise from their recumbent attitude, ship their

planks, and get the boat to one side of the tunnel, so as to pass in safety. The *Pioneer* will have done good service, if only in having led the way to an abolition of this dreadful duty of 'legging,' which so exhausts the men that, on their quitting a long tunnel near Birmingham, they are as wet from perspiration as if they had just been dragged out of the canal.

Our Cockney tunnel, however, is not so tediously protracted an affair, though long enough, I should think, to suit the majority of tastes for odd ways of travelling. For a little while after we have entered it, the water has a dark, clear look, and the sharp edges of its ripples catch the distant light with a rather solemn effect. The yellow atmosphere, seen through the round arch of our narrow tunnel, takes the shape and appearance of a moon half set in gloomy waves. Its large semicircle is obscured presently by the smoke from our funnel, the *Pioneer* being so inconsiderate as to burn coal that emits the densest clouds of carbon. Much to the discomfort of our helmsman, we are now compelled to crowd his little cockpit of a lower-deck, for the upper space is not sufficient for us all to stand upright in. Even with the care taken to prevent mishaps, a few of us have been brought in rough contact with the slimy brick-work. All the time of our underground passage, we are being half-stifled with the undigested fuel already mentioned. We get into daylight again, in ten minutes or so from the moment of entering this length of Stygian perspective; and, having got into daylight, we find that we have also got into Agar Town. A sort of 'vulgar Venice,' indeed, is Agar Town.

Our gondola seems quite a state-barge, worthy to carry Cleopatra, or the Lord Mayor, as we glide silently through this dismal spot, in which crime, and want, and ignorance herd in desperate citizenship together. The Agar townsmen are mostly abroad, plying a questionable livelihood; but the Agar townswomen shew their faces at squalid windows, and over tumble-down walls and rotten palings, and grin at us as we go past. The stone-yard of a workhouse is bounded on one of its sides by our water-way, and the parish Sisyphus pauses in his weary task to gaze, but not to grin. Men sunk deep in wretchedness are for the most part stupefied, and their faces wear a blank rather than a painful aspect. But it is otherwise with the abased and outcast daughters of the great family. In the progress of our fast canal-boat, we light upon this moral difference of the sexes. After the stone-yard comes a cinder-heap, a black mound, with several smaller black mounds, which are the siftings of the great one. It is a black wharf on which this heap stands, and a wild troop of black-faced women, in rags like sooty cobwebs, are working on it with great black sieves. The sight is painful enough, its utter poverty appearing as a fall of many degrees from the low estate of the stone-yard; but the dust-women are not, as the stone-breakers were, moodily silent. These poor creatures, who look as if they had neglected to go out of mourning for the hope that died before they knew it, shriek and gibber at us voyagers, and point with weird motion and shrill laughter at the strange craft steaming by.

The locks that we pass through are five. Both the *Pioneer* and her satellite go side by side when these impediments occur. In the time of stoppage, we have leisure to observe the people on the quays, and we do observe that they are not at all the same kind of people whom we see in our streets. Their dress, their manner, their language are foreign to the Londoner. They are Warwickers, mainly, these boatmen and lock-keepers of the Grand Junction Canal. Though some of them are metropolitan fixtures, and all are as much in Middlesex as in the north-western counties of England, there is not one who wears a London-made suit of clothes, or a London hat, or a London behaviour. For them, the obsolete act of parliament, forbidding any buttons but metal ones, appears to be

still in force. For them are flat seal-skin caps of great circumference especially manufactured; for them Shakspearian phrases, which puzzle the annotators, but which Warwickshire has popularly retained, do still exist. I heard two of these men, an old and a young one, talking together, like the grave-diggers in *Hamlet*, or like old Gobbo and Launcelot, or like any pair of Shakspeare's clowns you may mention. Will this loose-clad, brass-buttoned, fur-capped population of the canal and its banks continue to regard our fast canal-boat with the placidity which at present characterises their view? Or will the terrible fact dawn upon their understandings, that this same 'intr'dooshun o' stea-am on canals' may tend to the getting rid of a considerable amount of loose-clad, fur-capped, brass-buttoned human labour? Political economy teaches us, and truly teaches us, that every saving of toil, or rather every step by which toil is directed into more profitable channels, is a universal gain in the long-run; but the run is, unfortunately, a little too long for those who have calculated only on that common distance from hand to mouth; and while improvement's crop of grass is growing, certain steeds are but too liable to starve. There is hope, however, that the increase of the Company's business, consequent on the fresh advantages they are now prepared to offer to the public, will enable them to retain all their servants, distributing them over a greater number of boats. As for those real 'steeds,' hitherto employed to tow the vessels on the Grand Junction Canal, there is no fear of their starving—horse-flesh never does.

It is freezing hard, and snowing gently, as we steam onward past the locks of Camden Town, Kentish Town, and the Hampstead Road. Our pale faces, streaked with black, our red noses and blue lips, make up a wobegone picture. The banks of the canal are now getting more and more desolate; it is a dreary journey along the Regent's Park, and the gardens of the Zoological Society. Our fast canal-boat is the slowest of slow steamers, considered as the chosen vessel of a pleasure-trip. That the timber and the heavy grocery goods are travelling at twice the speed which they would attain in a barge hauled along by a horse and a rope, is true enough; but that the more or less scientific gentlemen in the steerage find this doubled rate of transit somewhat under the reasonable requirements of deck-passengers, compelled to stand in one narrow spot, on an intensely cold day, I think is equally a matter of fact. Philosophy itself could not, under the circumstances, feel proper gratitude towards Mr Burch, of Macclesfield, who invented the screw for propelling the boat that carried the goods that lay on the wharf that the Grand Junction Canal Company built by the City Basin.

It is a dreary journey, still, along St John's Wood, with the sloping gardens of North and South Bank on either hand. The backs of the houses in North and South Bank have a raw look, and the gardens are not very cheerful, at anyrate, on this December day. On we go, with paler cheeks, and redder noses, and bluer lips, till we have exchanged St John's Wood for Paddington, and have struck a few sparks of life out of that less forlorn-looking region. Here the canal is made ornamental, with islands and pleasure-boats, and terrace-like banks. A very pretty entrance to this vicinage is formed by a short tunnel, the outer arch being covered with ivy.

Arrived at the Gauge House, we transfer our numbered feet from the deck of the *Pioneer* to the little wharf, where we have the pleasure of seeing the cargo weighed by a very simple process. The weight of the boat being previously ascertained, all that the gauger has to do is to find, by a long measuring-rod, the depth from her water-line to her keel; and a calculation by figures will then enable him to tell the exact weight of the cargo to a fraction.

Three cabs convey the party of more or less scientific

gentlemen to St James's Hall, at the entrance to which place of various entertainment we all alight, and are taken by the idle crowd for an exceedingly dirty vestry. Dinner has been ordered, a day or two before, and we are happily in time not only for that, but for soap and water.

## THE FAMILY SCAPEGRACE.

### CHAPTER XI.—THE PERILS OF RAVENSHROPPING.

THE modesty of talent—provided that it be accompanied with a stock of patience—is always sure of its reward. If Master Richard Arbour had ever chanced to plume himself among the foreign customers of Mr Tipsaway upon his knowledge of the French tongue, it is not unlikely that the moment which found him in the grasp of the Russian count would have been his last. Rage and fear contended in the man's evil eyes, and blanched his cheek, while his wicked fingers tightened about the poor lad's throat, as though their trade was murder. Dick's countenance was rapidly growing black, when he bethought himself of throwing an expressive glance at the table, and of making as though he would reach with one of his hands the pencil that still lay there. He felt convinced that his life depended on the count's imagining that his secret was yet undiscovered—that he was a deaf and dumb man still in his eyes as in those of the rest of the world—and, therefore, instead of exclaiming: 'Oh, spare me, for I never meant to find you out;' or, 'Forgive me, count, for discovering that you are an impostor,' he judiciously confined himself to making signs.

The count relaxed his gripe to consider a little, and then released the lad altogether, though taking care to stand between him and the door. Dick took up the pencil and wrote: 'I am very sorry to have disturbed you, sir; I thought you had all left the room, and was coming in to put it straight.'

'You lie!' returned the count, in the most delicate and microscopic handwriting that ever was seen.

'I also came to see if there was any brandy left,' wrote Dick.

This did not happen to be in the least the case, but it was more in accordance with the Russian's notion of what was probable, than the simple truth of the other answer.

'What did you see?' inquired Gotsuchakoff, setting down the words with his practised fingers, while he kept his lynx eyes fixed upon the trembling youth.

'I saw you, count.'

'What else, boy; what else?'

'Please, count, I saw that you had drunk all the brandy.'

Gotsuchakoff was evidently at a nonplus. He did not know whether to believe the boy or not. He hesitated as to whether he should push him further, afraid, in case of his being unaware that he had really spoken, of impressing him too much with the importance of what had happened.

'And did you not *hear* anything?' wrote the count, unable to bear the horrid uncertainty which consumed him.

This was the most perilous moment of all to Dick, and luckily the lad was by this time fully aware of it. His features expressed the most extreme bewilderment, and even a touch of drollery. 'Hear, count?' wrote he, in rather a shaky hand, it must be confessed; 'how should I hear anything, with nobody but you in the room?'

The Russian was looking him through and through with a terrible distrust, but the smile which the lad had conjured up seemed completely to disarm him. He drew a long breath of intense relief, and wiped away the drops that stood upon his pale forehead. He had but uttered a single French word, after all, reasoned he, which, even if distinctly heard, might very well

have sounded to the lad's English ears like the mere guttural exclamation of a dumb man excited to passion. At all events, if murder were not to be done, it was better to believe this, and to efface the recollection of the whole matter from the boy's mind as soon as possible.

'I beg your pardon, young sir,' wrote he; 'I am afraid that I have been taking a little more drink than is good for me. Let us shake hands, and forget this stupid business.'

The Russian, to whom a bribe appeared no more unreasonable—and probably much less so—than a friendly present, or a fair commercial exchange, pressed a crown-piece into the hand of the barber's boy, whose fingers closed on it mechanically, and abruptly left the room. He had prolonged the interview to the utmost limits consistent with the other's safety, for the unnatural tension of Dick's faculties could be maintained no longer; he heard the count's heavy footsteps passing through the front shop—who probably saluted its proprietor with his accustomed courtesy, for Mr Tipsaway's voice replied: 'Good-bye, old dummy,' doubtless with a smile of great obsequiousness—and he heard no more, but fell down, face on the table, in a fainting-fit, thereby upsetting the brandy bottle.

The crash of the breaking glass brought Mrs Tipsaway, who had a housekeeper's ear for that particular noise, directly into the smoking-room; and her raised voice, for which Mr T. had a husband's ear, at once summoned that gentleman to her assistance.

'What do you think of this, Mr Tipsaway?' cried she with bitterness, naturally, though somewhat unjustly, directing her anger against the only animate object. 'What have you got to say for your pet apprentice now?'

Now, it was well known that Dick was rather the pet of the lady than of her husband, but when the female mind is excited, it not uncommonly spurns the trammels of vulgar fact; and Mrs Tipsaway kept her own mental powers particularly free and fetterless in that respect.

'He's as drunk as a young lord,' confessed Mr Tipsaway apologetically; 'there is not a doubt of that.'

'And what do we want of your young lords here?' inquired the lady with indignation. 'Why must you be picking up a young swell like this, who must have his best French brandy, forsooth, and destroy the bottle afterwards, when we might have had a charity-boy as cheap, or cheaper?—

How they could have got one cheaper, considering that they gave Master Richard Smith just nothing at all, cannot, unfortunately, be here disclosed, for Mrs Tipsaway pulled herself short up, when she had got thus far, to emit an expression of astonishment, which, in the mouth of a less genteel lady, might have been mistaken for a whistle.

'Look here!' cried she, exhibiting the boy's neck, the cravat of which she had been loosening; 'somebody has been trying to throttle the lad. Here are the marks of four fingers and a thumb.'

'Gotuchakoff, *sacre!*' murmured the lad, with his eyes still closed.

The barber and his wife exchanged looks of profound terror.

'That lad has been insulting the count, and the foreign gentlemen will never come here again, perhaps,' groaned Mr Tipsaway, to whom the refugees paid a very tolerable sum for the exclusive use of the smoking-saloon. 'What have you been doing, you young rascal?' inquired he, at the same time giving his genteel apprentice a tremendous shaking. 'What have you been at, sir, eh?'

'I saw nothing, I heard nothing,' replied poor Dick, who imagined that the Russian was still cross-examining him; 'I only came to put things to rights—

— Oh, it's you, Mr Tipsaway, is it?'

'Yes, it's me, you drunken young vagabond, and what then?'

'Why, here's some money that the count left me to pay for the broken glass,' quoth Dick, whose wits were reawakening. 'He was awfully drunk though, for all that, I do assure you. He set on me, just because I could not understand his telegraphing, like some wild animal.'

'He went through the shop very steadily,' observed Mr Tipsaway, perceptibly mollified by the silver, but still a little incredulous.

'That may do for Mr T.,' observed the better-half of that gentleman to herself, 'but not for me, young gentleman: I heard the glass break *after* the count left the house.'

'Anyhow, he nearly choked me,' observed Dick pettishly, and adjusting his neckcloth; 'and I had rather not have anything more to do with Count Gotuchakoff, please.'

'Pooh, pooh! he'll forget it the next time he comes,' returned Mr Tipsaway; 'and, besides, you are going to-morrow, Smith, to Miss Backboard's, instead of Frizzle, who, she complains, *will* giggle all the time he is cutting her young ladies' hair. The count will not certainly remember his drunken frolic for eight-and-forty hours.'

Dick thought within himself, that if Mr Tipsaway had felt the Russian's fingers at his own windpipe, he would not have described the occurrence quite so playfully; but since he had no desire to make the barber his confidant, he affected to be satisfied, and made no further complaint.

Mr Tipsaway, who had heard the muffled oratorio in full performance in the front-shop for several minutes, here rushed away to deprive the musician of his instrument, which he justly deemed was one that required a curtain or other means of concealment between the player and the general public, at least as much as any organ. Mrs Tipsaway stayed behind to lay her hand upon the lad's shoulder confidentially, and to observe in a motherly tone: 'Come, Dick, you must tell me the truth, my lad, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.'

Dick knew enough of the character of Mrs Tipsaway to be aware, that the commission of a secret to her ears would be about equivalent to advertising it in the columns of any local newspaper of tolerable circulation; so he smiled sweetly—a thing Dick could always do when conversing with a lady—and replied with simplicity: 'The whole truth about what, ma'am?' in order to gain time for fictitious composition.

'Now, don't aggravate me,' replied Mrs Tipsaway—and this time with a dash of piquancy in her accents, less motherly than step-motherly—for I am doing a hair-chain for a bride-elect, and can't afford to have my fingers set all of a tremble. What did the count give you that piece of money for, and how came that bottle broken?'

'I broke the bottle, Mrs Tipsaway,' exclaimed the youth, clasping his penitent hands.

'And the money, the money?' cried the lady, stamping her foot.

'The count gave me the money for having thrashed me so, because, because—'

'Because he caught you helping yourself to his brandy,' cried Mrs Tipsaway, triumphantly finishing the sentence.

'Ah, yes, ma'am. I perceive it is impossible to deceive your sagacity.'

'Then don't try it again, Smith, mind *that*,' continued the lady with emphasis. 'Men have tried it—women have tried it—Frizzle has tried it; but it has never succeeded yet with Martha Tipsaway. It is not very likely, therefore, that a child like you will have much chance. Trust me, boy, and I will take you to my arms—that is to say, of course, you must keep your distance, and not forget that you are the 'prentice,

and I the missis; but try to deceive me, young gentleman, and you'll wish yourself one of them figures in the window, whose ears cannot feel a box, nor whose mouth appreciate virtuals.'

With which piece of didactic Mrs Tipsaway swept out of the room in a whirlwind of silk and cap-strings.

#### CHAPTER XII.

##### MISS BACKBOARD'S YOUNG LADIES.

Miss Backboard's fashionable seminary for young ladies was situated in a pleasant suburb of the metropolis, and had a strip of garden lying in front of it, bearing the same relation to the house in superficial extent as each of the slices of carpet in the dormitories bore to its respective bed. A holly-tree, significant of Prudence, kept watch at the garden-gate; the daisy, emblem of Innocence, blushed in its little grass-borders; the modest violet, at its proper season, indicated, in its own sweet language, the character of the inmates of the establishment; no red rose cried: 'He is near!—he is near!' no white rose wept: 'He is late!' but such of Miss Backboard's young ladies as had got so far as to think about 'him' at all, were represented in that innocent plot by the unimpassionate lily, which whispers, 'I wait,' and, on one side of the gravel-walk that led to the front-door, by the acacia-tree, which sighs but of Platonic Love. Only when Miss Backboard eradicated the wicked iris and the too demonstrative jonquil from her parterre, it was inconsistent of her to spare that Virginian jasmine—symbol of separation—which climbed up the entire face of the house, and looked down, over the wall, upon the passion-flowers in the next garden.

The jasmine might look, but the young ladies mightn't. 'Not to look out of the window,' was one of the edicts of the Backboardian code, which might, for precautionary severity, have been drawn up by Mrs Praisedg Baresbones, for the benefit of female Cavaliers. Miss Backboard herself, however, was constantly on the watch at one or other of the casements, like Sister Anne on Bluebeard's tower, and took note of every male creature that came in at the little iron gate. She had already caused two bakers' boys to be dismissed from their situations, for whistling melodies relating to the affections as they approached her house; and a third was even now upon his trial for kissing his hand to her front-windows—the defence set up by the accused party being, that he was only engaged with his pocket-handkerchief. The postman was not permitted to intrust his letters for the establishment to any hand but hers; and she winnowed the correspondence thus obtained with a skill and completeness that Sir James Graham and his myrmidons might have envied. A pink envelope, or an envelope with a sealing-wax 'kiss' upon it, or with an affectionate motto on its seal, was arrested by her vigilant fingers as a health-officer would seize upon some infected wretch whose escape from quarantine must needs bring death and desolation into a thousand homes. No male handwriting was suffered to pass at all without inquiry of the would-be recipient; and if the serpent who wrote it was no nearer of kin than a bachelor-cousin, the missive was ruthlessly torn up, and scattered to the wanton winds. Nor was the export-trade less strictly watched than the import. All letters except to *bond-fide* relatives were inspected. Yes, conscientious Miss Backboard did indeed peruse the whole of the correspondence between the young ladies of her own establishment and their 'sternal friends' at similar educational seminaries or elsewhere: twice a week that indefatigable female performed the awful task in its completeness, beginning with, 'My own dearest, dearest Isabel' in the middle of the first page, and so, through the slanting shower of affectionate commonplaces to the all-

important postscript No. 2. No wonder the good lady was consumed by anxieties, and haggard with suspicions; no brain could stand such letter-reading twice a week for long. She looked for hidden meanings in sentences wherein the writer had seen no necessity for inserting any meaning at all; she scorched the missives before the fire, with a view of bringing forth the secrets concealed in lemon-juice that were never there; she conceived that some crafty cipher lay in the frequent and unnecessary dashes which italicised the general contents, and imagined elopements and rope-ladders lurked in the very loops of the *la*.

It was Miss Backboard herself who did Master Richard Arbour, otherwise Smith, the honour of receiving him at her own door-step, having reconnoitred him for several minutes—as a medieval porter might have eyed a stranger knight—before admitting him to even that proximity.

'Whence come you, boy?' quoth she, in that blank-verse style exceedingly popular with ladies of scholastic pursuits, when their time and tempers permit them to make use of it. 'Whence come you, and from whom?'

'I am the new barber's boy from Mr Tipsaway's, please, ma'am.'

Miss Backboard's eagle eye detected in the Gentle Youth too pronounced a gentility.

'I mistrust you, boy,' returned she; 'my mind misgives me: do you play a part with me?'

'No, please, ma'am, I play nothing. Frizzle plays a good deal, when master will let him; but the only time I ever tried, I broke a tooth.'

'Broke a tooth!' echoed the astonished schoolmistress; 'I don't know what you mean; I don't see that you have any teeth broken.'

'No, please, ma'am; it was only the tooth of the comb that was broken. Frizzle always plays upon a comb. It cost me eightpence to—'

'Good gracious! I hope you don't bring that comb here!' cried Miss Backboard sharply.

'O no, ma'am; that would not be "*comme il faut*,"' smiled Dick, with his best accent. The nature of his mission tickled the lad immensely, and put him in spirits too high for his position.

'What! you speak French?' exclaimed the terrified lady. 'You are no barber's boy.'

'*Perruquier*, if you please, madam; yes, that is what I am. It is essential to our fashionable connection, says Mr Tipsaway, that one, at least, in the establishment should have some knowledge of that language. I learned it from my boyhood.'

'Boyhood!' screamed Miss Backboard. 'Why, what do you call yourself now?'

'Mr Tipsaway calls me one of his young men, ma'am. "One of my young men will be at your house to-day, Miss Backboard," he wrote, meaning myself; and, indeed, I am more than fourteen years old already.'

'Fourteen,' murmured the schoolmistress to herself; 'that is not a dangerous age. Hum! Yes, you may come in.'

She ushered him into a small apartment on the right of the entrance, hung round with blank maps and a few unframed landscapes; a couple of enormous globes filled each a recess on either side of the fireplace, and a few books of the *Mangnall's Questions* class leaned up against one another on their shelves in a manner which, under any roof less correct than Miss Backboard's, would have suggested intoxication. An inclined plane—torture-engine peculiar to females—stood in one corner, and a pair of dumb-bells (probably the only ones in the house) in another. The apartment was, in short, devoted to the severer branches of the educational course, inclusive, as it subsequently appeared, of hair-cutting.

Miss Backboard rang the bell. 'Elizabeth,' observed she to the domestic, with the air of a stage-monarch

ordering a banquet, 'let a cloth be spread, and inform those young ladies who require his services, that this person—the young person from Mr Tipsaway's—is awaiting them in the Geographical Chamber. And, Elizabeth, tell Miss Crumby to come down first, because her dressing-gown is the largest, and will do for all the others.'

By the time Master Richard had arranged the cloth upon the floor, and put on the kangaroo apron, the young lady in question made her appearance. A loose and voluminous pink robe concealed the form which was also doubtless voluminous and pink; but the sight of her chubby cheeks and good-humoured eyes ought to have satisfied anybody.

'I think you forgot your curtsey, Miss Crumby,' observed the schoolmistress with marked severity.

That young lady immediately rose from the cane-bottomed chair and made a profound obeisance.

Master Richard Smith, in imitation of the Chevalier de Crespieny, bowed almost to the ground.

'Be quiet, boy!' ejaculated Miss Backboard sharply. 'Do you suppose that my pupil bowed to *you*?' The schoolmistress seated herself on the upper extremity of the inclined plane, and from that station superintended the operations.

'You are looking out of window, Miss Crumby, which is forbidden; be good enough to keep your eyes fixed on the ground.'

Miss Crumby did not reply; but Dick perceived the back of her neck to become of a deeper rose-colour, and her plump figure to shake as with secret laughter beneath his admiring eyes.

'You are exposing your hand, Miss Crumby, in an indelicate manner. Where are your mitts, which I have particularly directed to be worn in the presence of strangers?'

'I thought, madam,' replied the young lady, speaking in the French tongue, for the private ear of the schoolmistress, 'that you only meant we should do so in the presence of grown-up gentlemen, and that for this little boy here——'

'Silence, girl!' exclaimed the schoolmistress hastily, and in German: '"the little boy here," as you call him, understands French.'

Miss Crumby bit her lips, and again Dick perceived an undulatory motion communicated to the entire dressing-gown beneath him.

Before this young lady left the room, indeed, she had earned for herself a dozen rebukes, and one most barbarous punishment—a wooden mark was suspended from her ample neck, the presence of which ornament forbade any companion to communicate with her except in the German language, wherein she had shewn herself no great proficient in the Geographical Chamber. How long this was to be endured, Dick did not know; but he was relieved to hear Miss Crumby's cheerful laugh as she ran upstairs, apparently with the lightest of hearts, though with a step that went nigh to shake the establishment.

Angel after angel, sylph after sylph, came down and arrayed herself in the voluminous pink, under Dick's assiduous hands. He did not giggle, like Mr Frizzle, he did not again even venture upon bowing, like M. de Crespieny. Miss Backboard began to be mollified by his perfect behaviour, and to entertain that trust in his methodical quietness which she had denied to his tender years; she yawned while the fifteenth seraph was having her tips taken off, and inquired languidly whether there was any more to come. The seraph replied that there was only Miss Mickleham to come, who had been delayed until last by reason of her being under punishment.

'Very well, then,' replied Miss Backboard loftily; 'you may tell her that it is her turn when you have done.' With which that imperial female launched herself off her inclined plane with the air of a ship of ninety guns, and sailed majestically out of the room.

'Queer old lady that, is she not?' observed the fifteenth seraph interrogatively, about two minutes after the door had closed, and when it was made clear, by the creaking of the stairs, that her preceptress had really left the keyhole.

Master Richard Arbour, who had remarked the young lady under present treatment as being by far the best behaved and most rigid of all the heavenly bodies that had preceded her, was perfectly aghast at this familiarity.

'Look here,' pursued she, producing a considerable bundle of letters stamped, sealed, and directed in readiness for her Majesty's mails, 'put these in your pocket, and make haste. I have been trying to make you take hold of them this five minutes, only you're such a stupid boy. I was within half a second of running a hair-pin into you, I do assure you.'

Dick took the packet with an air of the profoundest astonishment. 'Well, and what am I to do with them, please, miss, now I've got 'em?'

'Why, post 'em,' ejaculated the young lady snappishly. 'What on earth do you suppose ought to be done with them? We always got Frizzle to post 'em, before you came, and we expect, of course, that you will do as much for us. Here's half-a-crown, and we're much obliged to you for your trouble.'

'Mademoiselle,' replied Master Richard Arbour, laying his hand and scissors on his heart, 'I will post the letters with pleasure; but to take your money for doing it is a thing quite out of the question.'

'Well, that's polite, at all events,' replied the young lady, rising and approaching the glass. 'But I don't think you cut my hair quite so well as the other. Why doesn't that stingy old lady let us have a couple of mirrors? One positively can't see *how* one looks. How do I look behind, boy?'

The startled Dick hastened to give it as his opinion that she looked charming from every possible point of view; whereupon the fifteenth seraph laughed, and said he was a nice lad.

'Only,' she added, 'don't you go telling Miss Mickleham about those letters, mind, because she's a little—a pantomimic action of the hands, significant of staylacing, here took place—a little strait-laced, you know, that's all. Good-bye, boy. Thank ye!'

With which adieu the young lady opened the door, and called Miss Mickleham in much such a tone as one female saint might evoke another to martyrdom: 'Miss Mickleham, the young person is waiting to cut your hair.'

Every male individual beneath a certain rank in the social scale was held in Miss Backboard's establishment to be a 'person,' while all above and of that rank were spoken of (and even that but very rarely) as 'gentlemen.' The word 'man' was entirely ignored, and perhaps unknown at Acacia House.

Most of the young ladies had hitherto floated into the apartment as though the air were water, and the little material substance that belonged to them had been made of cork; but Miss Mickleham used a somewhat graver mode of progress, either in consequence of being under punishment, or by reason of having a number of works upon Political Economy in her hands, that the author had the temerity to call 'popular,' but which, nevertheless, may have kept her down a little. That abstruse science oppressed her existence at Miss Backboard's (who considered its study to be a part of woman's mission), just as Practice had oppressed poor Dick elsewhere, and he intuitively sympathised with her as she put down, by the side of the terrestrial globe, all the volumes, save one, with a great sigh. That one she was bound never to part with, eating or drinking, sleeping or hair-cutting, until she had mastered certain rather unentertaining chapters upon the drain of gold; and she sat down with it in her hand in the pink dressing-gown. Dick's tender heart would have been touched by sight of that young cheek robbed of half its bloom by

sorrow, and by those long black eyelashes steeped in tears, had he not detected by her likeness to her father the beautiful daughter of good Mr Mickleham of Darkendin Street, at the first glance.

As it was, the memory of the old man's kindness moved him so, awaking, as often happens, other memories with it of loving hearts now sundered from his own perhaps for ever, that his eyes too began to fill with dew, which presently overflowing them, descended in a couple of large warm tears upon the young lady's neck. The tresses that should have protected it were in Dick's trembling hands, so that they fell directly upon the velvet skin with certainty of detection, and the sixteenth seraph jumped up from her chair, and exchanged the drain of gold for a shrill note of indignation.

'How dare you, sir?' she began; then, looking at Dick's tearful face, she sunk her voice—'What ails you, my good boy? Is there anything I can do for you, poor lad?'

'Yes, dear young lady, yea.'

The dear young lady looked like a ruffled swan at this exordium.

'Tell your good father that Richard Arbour is not ungrateful to him, though he may have seemed so, and that he could not look upon his daughter in her sorrow without being sad himself.'

'Are you Mr Arbour's nephew, then, that ran away?' cried she. 'Oh, pray go back—pray do, while there is time. Your uncle is being more and more set against you than ever. Papa can do little for you, though he has tried his best; but perhaps, if you would come back, he might do something. Do, pray, come at once to us—that is, to him. This is where we live.' She tore the fly-leaf out of the book she held, which happened to have her name and direction on it, and Dick kissed it gratefully, and put it carefully away.

'Perhaps I will, dear young lady; and if I am taken back, it shall at least be through your father. Forgive my rudeness and impertinence!'

'Hush!' cried the girl; 'I hear Miss Backboard coming. I have nothing to forgive in you—nothing.' She snatched up her books from their resting-place, and was about to leave the room, when the voluminous dressing-gown which she had forgotten to throw off, caught in the projecting leg of the terrestrial globe, and in another moment there was a frightful crash, and poor Miss Mickleham stood in horror amidst the wreck of the universe.

'Good heavens!' cried the schoolmistress, rushing in, 'what has happened? You clumsy little barber's monkey you, what have you done?'

'I couldn't help it, ma'am,' cried Dick, without an instant's hesitation; 'my apron caught in it just as I was trying to look out Jerusalem. I had done with the young lady, ma'am, and always wishing to improve myself when opportunity offers, was—'

'Silence, sir!' interrupted Miss Backboard viciously. 'Leave the room, Miss Mickleham, without one word, if you please—with one syllable. You have done me an irreparable damage, boy, and you shall never come to this house again.'

'You have got another globe, ma'am, haven't you?' replied Dick, pretending to whimper, but secretly delighted with having saved Miss Mickleham from the wrath of her mistress.

'Yes, you idiot,' ejaculated Miss Backboard; 'but it's a celestial one. Do you suppose that these globes are duplicates? If Mr Tipsaway doesn't punish you pretty severely, my lad, it will not be for want of a line from me, I do assure you.'

Dick was rather afraid of Miss Backboard's anticipating the promised chastisement there and then, and made haste to get out of Acacia House as soon as he could; and, indeed, she was not able to resist aiming a box at his ears as he passed her at the front-door, which he only eluded by great forethought and

activity. As soon as the garden-gate clanged behind him, however, Dick's face became radiant with happiness; and pulling out the address which Miss Mickleham had given to him, proceeded to enclose in it a considerable lock of soft brown hair, which he had covertly snipped from that young lady's luxuriant tresses.

#### GEMS AND JEWELS.\*

THERE is nothing in all 'the world's furniture' at once so costly and so worthless as a precious stone. The satisfaction which the contemplation of it produces is more superficial than that which is afforded by the meanest flower; for the meanest flower, we are told on high authority, may awake thoughts too deep for tears, and the finest diamond or pearl cannot accomplish that. The only value they possess beyond that conferred upon them by fashion arises from their rarity and durability; and even fashion, has first to be certified that it is the real thing, and not a counterfeit, upon which she bestows her favour, for pearls have dazzled her, before now, which had never lain in oyster-bed, and a bit of rock-crystal has more than once eclipsed the treasures of Golconda.

Not long ago, in Brazil, at Villa Rica, a free negro became possessed of a diamond so enormous, that he begged permission to present it himself to the prince-regent. 'A carriage and an escort were forthwith despatched to take him to court. Blahey threw himself at the regent's feet, and exhibited his diamond. The prince uttered an exclamation of surprise—the lords present were astounded: the stone weighed nearly a pound! The courtiers immediately set to work to find out the number of millions this monstrous jewel was worth. The great stone of Villa Rica, valued at troy weight, made a total of 2560 carats. Deducting the sixty carats for what little the stone lacked of a pound, there yet remained 2500 carats. In order to ascertain the commercial value of the stone, the carat must be multiplied by the square. The square of 2500 is 6,250,000, and estimating the carat at only 150 francs, the common price, we have the sum of 937,500,000 francs; and, as large diamonds are no longer submitted to the tariff, and as their nominal price increases in proportion as they exceed the ordinary dimensions, the Portuguese nobleman probably estimated the stone at two milliards, or, like thorough courtiers, at four. 'However this may be, the inestimable jewel was sent to the treasury, with a strong escort, and deposited in the hall of gems. As Mr Mawe was at Rio Janeiro when this wonderful discovery was made, the minister sent for him, and communicated to him all the particulars regarding the phenomenon; but at the same time expressed his private doubts of its reality. The English mineralogist was invited to examine the incomparable brilliant, and fix its value. Furnished with a letter from each minister—without which formality he could not be admitted—Mr Mawe went through several rooms, and crossed a great hall hung with crimson and gold, in which was a statue of natural size representing Justice with her scales. Finally, he reached a room in which were several chests; three officers, each having a key, opened one of these chests, and the treasurer with much solemnity exhibited the supposed diamond. Before touching the stone, Mr Mawe had already seen that it was nothing but a piece of rounded crystal; he proved this on the instant by scratching it with a real diamond, and this luckless scratch at once annihilated all the millions supposed to have been added to the treasury. The prince-regent received the news very

\* *Gems and Jewels. From the Earliest Ages down to the Present Time.* By Madame de Barrera. Bentley.

philosophically; but poor Blackey, who had come in a carriage, was left to travel back on foot.'

The largest real diamond in the world, belonging to the Rajah of Mattan, in Borneo, is still uncut, and weighs 367 carats; it has no rival nearer than the Orloff diamond, of 193 carats. It has never been brought to Europe, though the governor of Batavia once offered to the rajah £50,000 dollars for it, as well as two large war-brigs, with their guns and ammunition, and a considerable quantity of powder and shot. The number of diamonds in the world above 100 carats' weight, including the two already mentioned, is only six; but the history of each of these—which are called *paragons*—is a romance in itself.

The *Orloff*, according to some accounts, formed one of the eyes of the idol Scheringham, in the temple of Brahma. The fame of these bright eyes having reached a certain French grenadier of Pondicherry, he deserted, adopted the religion and manners of the Brahmins, and subsequently succeeded in escaping with one of the coveted orbs. He sold the jewel to a sea-captain for 50,000 francs; the sea-captain sold it to a Jew for 300,000; and an Armenian, named Shafrass, bought it for a much larger sum, and disposed of it to Count Orloff, for the Empress Catharine, for 450,000 roubles, and a grant of Russian nobility.

The Regent Diamond is the most perfect, and the finest water of the *paragons*. It originally weighed 400 carats; but the cutting of it as a brilliant, which took two years' labour, and cost £300, reduced its size to 137 carats. This diamond, which is also called the *Pitt*, was stolen from Golconda, and sold to the grandfather of the Earl of Chatham, when governor of Fort St George, in the East Indies, for £20,000, although Pope suggests that that gentleman purloined it from the original thief—

Asleep and naked, as an Indian lay,  
An honest factor stole the gem away.

The French king purchased it for £92,000, Mr Pitt reserving the fragments taken off in the cutting; but its value is now estimated at double the price paid for it. This jewel was pawned by Napoleon, made a political bait by Talleyrand to seduce Prussia, and stolen by robbers, who only returned it because of the impossibility of disposing of it without detection. A certain convict in the French galleys for some time enjoyed a high pre-eminence among his fellows as 'the man who had stolen the Regent.'

The Star of the South, the largest diamond ever brought from Brazil, was discovered by three wretched men, condemned to perpetual banishment in the wildest part of the interior, but who of course obtained the revocation of their sentence.

Sixth and last of the *paragon* diamonds is the Koh-i-noor, now weighing but one hundred and two carats, but supposed to have once been the largest ever known, and the same seen by Tavernier among the jewels of the Great Mogul. It is confidently asserted that this famous gem belonged to Karna, king of Anga, three thousand years ago. According to Tavernier, this gem was presented to Cha-Gehan, the father of Aurungzebe, by Mirzimola, when that Indian general, having betrayed his master, the king of Golconda, took refuge at the court of the Great Mogul. Since it was admired by the French traveller, this diamond has passed through the hands of several Indian princes, and always by violence or fraud. The last Eastern possessor was the famous Runjeet Singh, king of Lahore and Cashmere, from whom it passed into the hands of the English on the annexation of the Punjab: it was brought to London in 1850. 'The king of Lahore had obtained this jewel in the following manner: having heard that the king of Cabul possessed a diamond that had belonged to the Great Mogul, the largest and purest known, he invited the fortunate owner to his court, and there, having him in his power, demanded his diamond. The guest,

however, had provided himself against such a contingency, with a perfect imitation of the coveted jewel. After some show of resistance, he reluctantly acceded to the wishes of his powerful host. The delight of Runjeet was extreme, but of short duration, the lapidary to whom he gave orders to mount his new acquisition pronouncing it to be merely a bit of crystal. The mortification and rage of the despot were unbounded; he immediately caused the palace of the king of Cabul to be invested, and ransacked from top to bottom. But for a long while all search was vain: at last, a slave betrayed the secret; the diamond was found concealed beneath a heap of ashes. Runjeet Singh had it set in an armlet, between two diamonds, each the size of a sparrow-egg.'

According to Mr Tennant, the great Russian diamond singularly corresponds with the Koh-i-noor, so as to suggest that the two once formed a single crystal; and when united, they would, allowing for the detaching of several smaller pieces in the process of cleaving, make up the weight described by Tavernier.

What bloodshed, what heart-burnings, what tedious and expensive negotiations have each of these shining pebbles cost its various possessors, and how exceedingly small the gratification of having obtained them at last, independently of the soothing thought that nobody else has got them! If it were not useless to lift up our single voice against an almost universal custom, we would ask what more barbarous and outlandish usage can be imagined, than that which obtains amongst even our king's daughters and most honourable women, of drilling a hole in the lobes of their ears for the reception of a jewel? and why are they so ready to exclaim 'savage' against a maiden who may similarly adorn her nose? Let us, however, be thankful that in these days, if not cured of our lunacy, there is at least some measure to our madness in connection with precious stones; that no monarch of a starving people would now offer three millions of crowns for the possession of a useless diamond, as Louis XV. did; and that no living Englishman would so mistake the meaning of loyalty to his queen as to grind a pearl worth £15,000 into a cup of wine, in order to fitly drink her health, as did Sir Thomas Gresham. This plagiarist from Cleopatra has had many a rival in more modern times. The courtiers of Louis XV. were wont, in their insane extravagance, to pulverise their diamonds. 'A lady having expressed a desire to have the portrait of her canary in a ring, the last Prince de Conti requested she would allow him to give it to her; she accepted, on condition that no precious gems should be set in it. When the ring was brought to her, however, a diamond covered the painting. The lady had the brilliant taken out of the setting, and sent it back to the giver. The prince, determined not to be gainsaid, caused the stone to be ground to dust, which he used to dry the ink of the letter he wrote to her on the subject.'

As to the association of gems with dress, the accounts of past extravagance which Madame de Barrera gives us in this volume are of a nature to make Paterfamilias shudder, inured to crinoline though he be. Nor were the ladies by any means the only spendthrifts. One court suit of King James' 'Sweete Gospespe,' the Duke of Buckingham, cost no less than £80,000. Nay, to come quite close to our own times, when Murat took refuge in Corsica after the fall of the empire, although he had in money but 10,000 francs, which he carried in his belt, the band around his hat was worth 90,000; one of his epaulets, 50,000; while he carried about with him two diamonds valued at 200,000 francs. In all ages, in short, and in all countries, this passionate admiration for precious stones has been exceedingly remarkable; and they have been used in Holy Writ itself, for the most solemn comparisons, and to denote the highest degree of perfection—the New Jerusalem, even, being revealed

to St John under the figure of an edifice with a wall of jasper, while each of its twelve doors was a single pearl.

In the Talmud, it is asserted that the ark was lit only by precious stones—so that the famous question of 'Where was Noah when his candle went out?' would seem to be to the last degree unauthorised and extravagant. From the same venerable pages we learn that one object in nature is alone to be esteemed of higher value than pearls—namely, a pretty woman. 'On approaching Egypt, Abraham locked Sarah in a chest that none might behold her dangerous beauty.' But when he was come to the place of paying custom, the collector said: 'Pay us the custom.' And he said: 'I will pay the custom.' They said to him: 'Thou carriest clothes,' and he said: 'I will pay for clothes.' Then they said to him: 'Thou carriest gold,' and he answered them: 'I will pay for my gold.' On this they further said to him: 'Surely thou bearest the finest silk,' he replied: 'I will pay custom for the finest silk.' Then said they: 'Surely it must be pearls that thou takest with thee,' and he only answered: 'I will pay for pearls.' Seeing that they could name nothing of value for which the patriarch was not willing to pay custom, they said: 'It cannot be but thou open the box, and let us see what is within.' So they opened the box, and the whole land of Egypt was illuminated by the lustre of Sarah's beauty—far exceeding even that of pearls.'

And this pretty story in connection with 'gems and jewels' is the only piece of sentiment or poetry which we remember to have been shed upon the custom-house authorities of any nation.

#### OCCASIONAL NOTES.

##### CO-OPERATION.

In a tract on Co-operation (the first of a series on Social Science, by W. Chambers), it was stated that the Equitable Pioneers' Co-operative Society of Rochdale had, during 1859, done business to the extent of £104,012, and that the profits realised amounted to £10,739. From the published Report, which has just reached us, it appears that the business done by the Society in 1860 amounted to £152,063, and that the profits were £15,906—within a trifle of £16,000 realised by a body of working-men, simply through a method of supplying themselves with the necessities of life! These facts are so remarkable that they seem deserving of publicity. At Bury, another Lancashire town, there appears to be a co-operative store concern approximating in success to that of Rochdale. We see, that although it began but five years ago, with only a capital of £14, the business done by it already reaches £50,000 per annum. We might expect that, with such examples of marked success, bodies of working-men in all parts of the country would attempt similar co-operative associations. Unfortunately, for some reasons or other, schemes of this kind have often either failed entirely or made poor progress. Such is the case particularly in Scotland. The good common-sense, aptitude for business, and integrity of the Lancashire operatives in carrying out plans of co-operation, cannot be sufficiently applauded.

##### LIFE-BOATS.

A great effort, as we understand, is in the course of being made to extend the system of life-boats along the shores of the United Kingdom; and as this most praiseworthy object can be effected only by charitable contributions, we beg to commend it to general notice. From a lately published report, it appears that the Royal Life-boat Association (office, 14 John Street, Adelphi, London), expended last year upwards of £1100 in awards for saving 499 persons from drowning by shipwreck on our coasts.

The number of lives saved by life-boats and other means, since the formation of the society, has been 11,824, for which services 82 gold medals, 665 silver medals, and £13,000 in cash, have been dispensed as rewards; the institution has also expended nearly £40,000 on life-boat establishments. The stories told of the successful efforts made to save life by these boats in the case of frightful storms on the coasts, are of the most thrilling nature, and would form a volume as interesting as anything in romance. After all was done, last year, as many as 1600 persons were drowned along the shores of the British islands; and keeping in mind that many of these might have been saved, had life-boats been at hand, it should require small persuasion from us to enforce the claims of this most useful Association.

#### LITTLE FLORENCE.

LITTLE Florence, fond and free,  
Playing by the apple-tree,  
Laughing on her mother's knee—

Sunbeams slanting on her hair,  
Flowing wreaths of flowerets fair  
Dangling from her in the air.

Fast and faster go her feet  
Where the grass and sunshine meet :  
Joyful Florence!—Life is sweet.

Little Florence, mild and weak,  
Trouble looking from her cheek,  
Scarcely can she move or speak—

Looks out to the falling rain—  
All a mother's cares are vain ;  
Pillows may not ease her pain.

Gladness has a flitting will—  
How came she to taste of ill ?  
Joy is evanescent still.

Little Florence, weak and worn,  
Like a faint star left forlorn,  
Trembling on the point of morn.

Angel forms are in the air,  
Flitting on the golden stair,  
Bearing up a mother's prayer.

Little Florence, cold and dead,  
Green grass growing overhead,  
Waiting for thy wonted tread—

Lying by the apple-tree—  
Sunshine comes to look for thee,  
Comes to crown thy wonted glee.

And thy mother leaves her home,  
Comes here, where she used to come :  
Silent Florence! Death is dumb.

Little Florence, clothed in white,  
Looking back upon the night,  
Standing in the shadeless light—

Walking up the golden street,  
Sitting at the Saviour's feet,  
Where the pure and holy meet.

Shadows stood on yonder shore,  
Waiting for the heretofore,  
They shall wait for thee no more.

Thou didst pass them o'er the flood,  
Left them standing where they stood—  
Angel Florence! God is good.

DAVID RAMSAY.